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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! *STUBBORN*, EH? KEEP COMIN' BACK FOR *MORE*, EH? WELL, THERE'S *PLENTY MORE*.. SO *KEEP COMIN'!* BESIDES, MY *IDIOT EDITORS* JUST GAVE ME A *BOOST* IN SALARY! IT'S A *BOOST* OF A *RIVAL PUBLISHER!* I GET THE *REST* OF *HIS CORPSE* NEXT ISSUE! HEE, HEE! YEP, IT'S *ME*, AGAIN! *THE OLD WITCH*, MISTRESS OF *THE HAUNT OF FEAR...SHIVER-CHEF, CREEP-COOKER*, AND ALL THAT SORT OF *ROT!* C'MON IN! MY CAULDRON'S *BOILED OFF* TO A *CRUD*, WAITING FOR YOU! LOOKS LIKE *GARBAGE!* HEY! *THERE'S* A YARN! AND I'LL JUST *TELL* IT TO YOU! IT'S ABOUT A *GARBAGE COLLECTOR!* SAY, OLD *YOU* GET ANY *ST. VALENTINE'S DAY CARDS?* WELL, *THIS* GARBAGE COLLECTOR DID! *READY?* I *CALL* THIS *HORROR-HELPING*...

POETIC JUSTICE!

OLD ABNER ELLIOT STOOD ON THE PORCH OF HIS RAMSHACKLE HOUSE GRINNING DOWN AT THE CHATTERING, GIGGLING GROUP OF CHILDREN BEFORE HIM! HIS WRINKLED EYES WERE GLAZED AND WET AS HE STUDIED THEIR BEAMING FACES...

GOLLY, MR. ELLIOT! THEY'RE JUST LIKE *NEW!*

THEY'RE *SWELL!*

YOU FIXED 'EM UP *FINE!*

GEE! *THANKS* FOR THE *TOYS*, MR. ELLIOT!

OLD ASHER ELLIOT WAS A FAR-EAST MAN! FOR THIRTY-SIX YEARS, HE'D BEEN COLLECTING THE REFUSE OF THE TOWN! HE'D NEVER MADE MUCH MONEY AT IT, BUT HE'D BEEN A HAPPY MAN! THAT IS, UNTIL ABOUT TWO YEARS BEFORE...WHEN ASHER'S WIFE DIED...

GLAD YOU LIKE THE TOYS, KIDS! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MR. ELLIOT!

SINCE HIS WIFE'S DEATH, ASHER HAD BEEN LONELY...VERY LONELY! SO HE'D STARTED SALVAGING THE BROKEN TOYS HE'D FOUND IN THE REFUSE CANS! HE'D WORKED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR REPAIRING THEM SO THAT HE COULD GIVE THEM TO THE POOR CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS TIME...

GONNA DO THIS AGAIN NEXT YEAR, MR. ELLIOT?

YEP! EVERY YEAR TILL I... TILL I...CAN'T, ANYMORE!

SEE, YOU'RE SWELL, MR. ELLIOT! CAN WE COME AROUND AND WATCH YOU, SOMETIMES, MAYBE, RUN? WATCH YOU WORK?

ANYTIME, KIDS! ANYTIME!

DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM ASHER ELLIOT'S RUN-DOWN HOUSE, HENRY BURGUNDY, THE TOWN'S RICHEST MAN, HAD BUILT A LUXURIOUS MODERN HOME FOR HIMSELF AND HIS ONLY HEIR...HIS SPOILED SON, HAROLD...

LISTEN TO THOSE BRATS HOWLING AND YELLING!

ARE LOOK AT THAT BROKEN-DOWN RAT-TRAP! IT'S AN EYE SORE! WHY DOESN'T HE SELL OUT, DAD?

WELL, WHAT CAN I DO, SON? I'VE TRIED PULLING STRINGS TO EVICT HIM, BUT HE OWNS THE HOUSE AND LOT...FREE AND CLEAR!

DIRTY OLD SLOB! A GARBAGE MAN, NO LESS! UGH! HOW REVOLTING!

HENRY BURGUNDY HAD OFFERED ASHER A HANDSOME PRICE FOR HIS DILAPIDATED OLD HOME, BUT ASHER HAD REFUSED TO SELL...

AH, THE OLD GEEZER'S SENTIMENTAL ABOUT THE DUMP! SAYS HE AND HIS WIFE LIVED THERE HAPPILY FOR THEIR WHOLE MARRIED LIFE...AND HE WANTS TO DIE THERE, TOO, JUST AS SHE DID!

BUT IT RUINS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, DAD! IT DEPRECIATES THE VALUE OF OUR PROPERTY!

URGE...URGE WE CAN FORCE HIM TO MOVE... START A SMEAR CAMPAIGN! HE'S A SENSITIVE OLD FOOL! WE COULD MAKE IT ROUGH ON HIM!

HEY! NOW YOU'RE TALKIN', POP! AND FIRST OF ALL... LET'S FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET RID OF THOSE LOUSY ANIMALS HE'S GOT!

IN ASHEN'S LONELINESS, HE'D BEGUN TO PICK UP ANY POOR STRAY DOG OR CAT THAT HE'D FOUND SCRAPPING OUT FOOD IN THE REFUSE CANS; HE'D TAKEN THEM INTO HIS HOME, FED AND CARED FOR THEM, AND KEPT THEM AS COMPANY TO FILL HIS LONELY HOURS...
HE MUST HAVE SEVEN OR EIGHT DOGS...AND TEN OR ELEVEN CATS!
Y'KNOW HOW HE FEEDS 'EM, DAD? HE COLLECTS SCRAPS FROM HIS GARBAGE TRUCK! HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO FEED ONE OF THOSE STRAYS IF HE HAD TO BUY THE FOOD!
WELL, THE FIRST THING I'M GOING TO DO IS MAKE HIM GET RID OF THOSE PETS OF HIS!
AND I'LL START A GOSSIP CAMPAIGN! BOY, WE'LL RUN HIM OUT OF TOWN... FAST!
MEANWHILE, ASHER... OBLIVIOUS TO THE INSIDIOUS CAMPAIGN THE BURGUROYS WERE STARTING, CONTINUED MAKING HIS ROUNDS...
HEY! HERE COMES MR. ELLIOT!
HI, MR. ELLIOT!
HI, KIDS!
KIND HEARTED ASHER NEVER FAILED TO FILL HIS POCKETS WITH CANDY BOUGHT WITH HIS HARD-EARNED MONEY! HE'D PASS IT OUT TO THE CHILDREN AS THEY CROWDED AROUND HIS ARCIERT GARBAGE WAGON...
ANY CANDY TODAY MR. ELLIOT?
HERE YOU ARE, KIDS!
THANKS, MR. ELLIOT!
TO THE FOLKS OF THE TOWN, ASHER AND HIS HAYTLETRAP HIS WERE A FRIENDLY AND FAMILIAR SIGHT! EVERYBODY LOVED OLD ASHER ELLIOT...
MORRIN', AARER! HOW'S BUSINESS TODAY? SMELLY, HUH? HAW, HAW!
HEH, HEH! THAT'S RIGHT, MR. GARDEN!
BUT THE WHEELS OF HAVE WERE BEGINNING TO TURN...
SORRY, MR. SUH-GUNDY! THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT! MAYBE IF THE FOLKS AROUND YOWN WANTED A LICENSING LAW PASSED...
DOG AND CAT LICENSES, EH? SAY, THAT'D DO IT! HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY THOSE!
WOT-UH
AND SO, OH COLD JANUARY NIGHTS...
HOW'S THAT, DAD?
DIG 'EM UP MORE! OLD MAN GAKEH WILL BE STEAMING! THOSE ARE HIS PRIZE ROSE BUSHES!

THE DIGGINS IN THE VARIOUS GARDENS AROUND TOWN WERE BLARED ON...
ARNER ELLIOT'S MUTTS, MR BAKER! THEY MUSTA DORE IT! WE OUGHT TO MAKE HIM GET RID OF 'ER!
RY PRIZE ROSES! RUINED! YOU'RE RIGHT, HAROLD!
LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE TOWNSFOLK WHOSE GARDENS HAD BEEN DESTROYED WERE AROUSED...
HE'S GOT TO GET RID OF THOSE STRAY MONGRELS! A LICENSE LAW'S THE ONLY WAY!
THEN LET'S MAKE THE TOWN BOARD PASS ONE!
ARO SO..
YES, OFFICER?
IT'S ABOUT YOUR DOGS AND CATS, MR. ELLIOT! YOU'LL HAVE TO BUY LICENSES FOR 'EM, OR THEY GO TO THE POUND! IT'S A NEW LAW!
LICENSES? HOW... HOW MUCH ARE THEY?
TWO-FIFTY APIECE, MR ELLIOT! THAT ADDS UP TO AN AWFUL LOT FOR YOUR MENAGERIE!
IT WAS A SAD DAY FOR ABNER ELLIOT WHEN THEY CAME AND TOOK HIS PETS AWAY! ELEVEN CATS AND TEN DOGS WOULD HAVE COST THE POOR OLD MAN MORE THAN FIFTY DOLLARS! HE JUST DIDN'T HAVE THE MONEY
THERE THEY GO, POP! HEH, HEH! HE'S ONLY KEPT ONE!
WHEN I'M THROUGH, SON, HE WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO AFFORD THAT ONE!
HERRY BURGUNOT WENT TO SEE AN ACQUAINTANCE IN A NEIGHBORING TOWN
SO YOU WANT ME TO START A GARBAGE COLLECTING SERVICE IN COMPETITION WITH ABNER ELLIOT, EH, HERRY?
THAT'S RIGHT, FRED! I WANT TO PUT HIM OUT OF BUSINESS! YOU CUT HIS PRICE IN HALF!
I CAN'T DO IT, HERBERT! I'D LOSE MONEY!
DON'T WORRY, FRED! I'LL MAKE UP FOR WHAT YOU LOSE, AND YOU'LL BE SURE TO SHOW A HANDSOME PROFIT, BESIDES! I'LL PAY YOU OUT OF MY OWN POCKET! BUT KEEP THIS QUIET, EH?
4

MEANWHILE...
THAT'S WHAT I SAID! HE'S NOTHING BUT A FILTHY OLD MAN, MRS. BUTTERLY! DO YOU REALIZE HE'S BROUGHT RATS INTO THIS NEIGHBORHOOD?
OH, DEAR!
LORD KNOWS WHAT YOUR CHILDREN LEARN FROM HIM, MRS. PHELPS! HE'S SO DIRTY! AFTER ALL... A GARBAGE MAN!
HOW AWFUL!
A MAN LIKE HIM SHOULD BE FORCED TO MOVE OUT OF THIS NEIGHBORHOOD, MRS. AMES! IT ISN'T RESPECTABLE!
YOU'RE SO RIGHT!
AND WHEN ONE OF THE CHILDREN BECAME SERIOUSLY ILL, THE BURGUNDYS JUMPED AT THE CHANCE.
IT'S PROBABLY THAT CANDY ABNER ELLIOT GIVES THE KIDS! FULL OF DISEASE DIRTY...CONTAMINATED
HE OUGHT TO BE RUN OUT... THAT'S WHAT!
THEN FRED AMSTERDAM MOVED IN..BACKED BY OLD MAN BURGUNDY.
HALF THE PRICE, YOU SAY?
CORRECT! HALF WHAT YOU'RE PAYING NOW...AND BETTER SERVICE!
WHERE DO I SIGN?
THE WHEELS OF HATE WERE SPINNING FASTER NOW
YOU HEARD ME! IF I CATCH YOU, OR HEAR THAT YOU WENT TO THAT DIRTY OLD MAN'S HOUSE, I'LL WHIP THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF YOU! UNDERSTAND?
YES, DADDY!
AND SO, HIS PETS GONE...THE CHILDREN NO LONGER COMING TO SEE HIM...HIS BUSINESS WIPED OUT... PEOPLE REFUSING TO TALK TO HIM, ABNER ELLIOT WITHDREW INTO THE LONELINESS OF HIS DREARY, RUN-DOWN HOME...
SOB...SOB! CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, BOY! USED TO BE FOLKS WERE FRIENDLY! HOW...NOW I'M ALL ALONE... 'CEPT FOR YOU, BOY!

BUT AS FEBRUARY ROLLED AROUND, THE BURGUNDYS PREPARED TO POUR SALT INTO ASNER ELLIOT'S GAPING WOUNDS...
LISTEN, SON! GET THIS! I BOUGHT THIS VALENTINE FOR OLD MAN ELLIOT! 'NOISY ARE CHILDREN...LOUD IS A SELL! PUNGENT IS PERFUME... BUT YOU JUST SMELL...FROM GARBAGE!' HAW, HAW! I ADDED THAT LAST CRACK!
HEY! THAT'S TERRIFIC, DAD! I GOTTA GET ME ONE!
I HAVE AN IDEA, SON! I KNOW WHERE I CAN BUY A WHOLE CARLOAD OF THESE INSULTING VALENTINES! IF WE COULD GET EVERYONE IN TOWN TO SEND OLD MAN ELLIOT ONE...
...HE'D MOVE OUT, SURE! WE COULD BUY HIS PROPERTY CHEAP! LET'S GET 'EM AND PASS 'EM OUT!
AND SO, AS ST. VALENTINE'S DAY NEARED...
HERE'S ONE FOR YOU, MR. BAKER! MAKE SURE YOU MAIL IT OUT, EH?
EEH, EEH! THIS ONE'S A LULU, HENRY! 'FIFTEEN AND FIFTEEN MAKE THIRTY' YOUNG GALS ARE AWFULLY PUNTY! BUT ON VALENTINE'S DAY ALL I WANT TO SAY IS YOU ARE DISGUSTINGLY DINTY!" EEH, EEH!
IN MEM
MR BURGUNDY AND HIS SPOILED SON HAROLD PASSED OUT THE MEAN-SNEAKING CARDS TO THE WHOLE TOWN.
LISTEN TO THE CARD I GOT FOR OLD MAN ELLIOT, MARTHA! 'A TREE IS BEAUTIFUL, IF ITS OWNER PRUNES IT / BUT OUR TOWN ISN'T, 'CAUSE YOUR HOUSE RUINS IT!' HAH, HAH! ISN'T THAT SOMETHIN'?
ON ST. VALENTINE'S EVE, STAMPS WERE LICKED AND ENVELOPES SEALED...
HI, ED! NICE NIGHT!
YEAH, TO MAIL ST. VALENTINE'S DAY CARDS! HEH, HEH!
AND EARLY THE NEXT MORNING...
LOOK AT THIS BOX! A WHOLE STACK O' MAIL! HOW COME? WHAT'S TODAY?
ELLIOT
OH, THAT'S IT! FEBRUARY FOURTEENTH! ST. VALENTINE'S DAY! WELL, I'LL BE DARNED! THOSE LIL' TYKES DIDN'T FORGET ME AFTER ALL!

THEN, ONE BY ONE, OLD ASNER ELLIOT OPERED AND READ THS VICIOUS, SHAMEFUL CANOS...

'S..S...SOME PEOPLE LIVE IR THS COUNTRY! S..S...SOME...PEOPLE...SOS...LIVE IN TOWN! WHY... DON'T YOU...DO US A...SOS...FAVOR! J...JUMP IR THE... R...RIVER...AND SOS...SOS...

'SOME...FOLKS...ARE BORR TO MAKE MONEY... OTHERS...TO KILL...ANO TO...ROS! I WAS...SORR FOR ONE PURPOSS... TO CALL YOU...A...OINTY OLD...SLOS...' SNIFF... SNIFF...

FON WEEKS AFTEN ST VALENTINE'S DAY, NO ONE SAW HIDE NOR HAIR OF ASNER ELLIOT...

MAYBE RE *LEFT TOWN*, POP? *WENT AWAY...?*

THEN I'LL *BUY UP* HIS HOUSS FOR *BACK TAXES*. HEH! HEH!

FINALLY, AFTER TNO MONTHS HAD PASSED, CURIOSITY GOT TRS SSTTER OF THE TOWNSFOLK! THEY MILLED AROUND ASNER ELLIOT'S RUR-DOWR HOME...

LET'S JUST DOWN THE DOOR! LET'S SEE WHAT IT *LOOKS* LIKE *INSIDE!*

YEAH...THE *FILTHY HOVEL!*

SO THEY SROKE IRTO ASNER ELLIOT'S HOUSE! ONLY IT SURPNISED THEM! IT *WASN'T* INFESTSD WITH RATS...AND IT *WASN'T* FILTHY AND DIRTY...

WHY, IT'S...IT'S ALL *NEAT* AND *ORDERLY!*

SPIC AND SPAN. CEPT FOR SOME DUST ON THE POLISHED TABLES!

YES, ASNER ELLIOT'S HOUSE SURPRISED THE TOWRSPEOPLE. *REALLY* SURPRISED THEM! SVERYTHING WAS IR ITS PLACE. EVENYTHIRS WAS CLEAN...SPOTLESS! ORLY ONE THINS MARRSD THS ORDERLINESS...OMLY ORS THING WAS OUT OF PLACE... *ASHER'S TWO-MONTH OLD CORPSE, HANGING IN THE PARLOR.*

HE...HE'S DEAD!

...KILLED HIMSELF!

NOW, NOW, KIDDIES! DON'T PEEA AT THE ERDIRG! RELAA ARD *ENJOY* IT! DON'T WONRY! *I'M* AS MAD AT RENRY EURBURDY AND HIS SON AS *YOU* ARE! WE WON'T LET HIM GET AWAY WITH THIS...OR RATHER *ABNER WON'T!* EUT IT TOOK HIM ALMDST A YEAR! LET'S SEE! IT *WAS* A YEAR...A *WHOLE* YEAR AFTER ABNER AILLED HIMSELF!

THEY EURIED HIM IN POTTER'S FIELD, JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN! OR THE EVE OF FEBRUARY FOURTEENTH, JUST AE THE TOWN STEEPLE-BELL TOLLED MIDNIGHT...ON THE FIRST ARRIVERSARY OF ABNER'S SUICIDE. A STRAREE THING HAPPENED! THE SOIL ON ABRAR'S SRAVE CRACKED DPEN! A FETID ROTTINS HARD REACHED UP...

...THEN FOLLOWED! THE THING PUSHED UP IRTO THE ERISA WIRTER AIR! IT EDT TO ITS FEET, SWAYING URCERTAINLY...

THER IT STUMELED OFF TOWARD TOWN! CRAWLING CLODS DF ERAVE MUD FELL AWAY AS IT TOTTERED ALONE! SITS DF MUDDY, MOULDY, FOUL-SMELLING FLESH DROPPED IN ITS PATR! IT SEEMED TO KRDW...TO *SENSE* WHERE IT WAS GOING...

HAROLD EURGUNDY WAS ADDRESSING ST. VALERTINE'S DAY CARDS, WHER THE THING CAME IN! THEY WERE LEFT-DVERS FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR! HAROLD SPUN AROUND AS THE SEARING STENCH SURR...

YAAAAAAAAAAAH!

IN THE MORNING, OLD HENRY SURGUNDY LOOKED FOR RAROLD, ARD COULDN'T FIND HIM! BUT IR HIS RODM, HE FOUND A NEATLY-TIED PACKAGE! THE CARD SAID..."A VALENTINE'S DAY EREETING TO HERRY!" HE OPENED IT...

GOOD LORD!

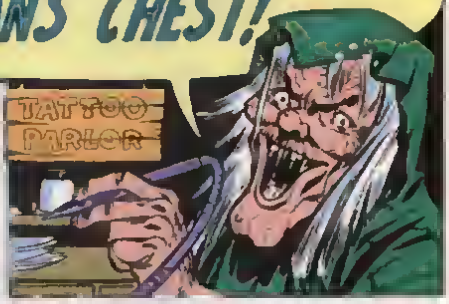
YEP, AIDDIES, RAROLD'S *HEART* WAS IN THE REAT LITTLE PACAAGE. ALL *BLOODY* AND *STICKY*! WELL, DON'T LOOK SO *SHOCKED*! THAT'S WHAT YOU *SEND* ON *ST. VALENTINE'S DAY*, ISN'T IT? *HEARTS*? WHA...? NOT *REAL* DRESP GULP! AN' *I'VE* EEEN DOIN' IT FOR *YEARS*! NO *WONDER* I'M *NOT POPULAR*! NOW...IF YOU CAR STILL *HOLD* THE CRUNNY MAG...TURN TO THE *VAULT-KEEPER*! HE'S EDT RIE *DWN* YARN TO TATTOO! 'BYE! SEE YOU LATER!

-THE END-

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! YEP! IT'S THE *VAULT-KEEPER* AGAIN... YOUR HOST IN HORROR! ALL READY TO HAVE YOUR WITS SCARED OUT OF YOU? OH? ONLY *HALF-READY*, EH? WELL, COME INTO THE *VAULT OF HORROR* AND SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT *CORPSE* OVER THERE! UH...UH! BE *CAREFUL!* DON'T SIT ON HIS *CHEST!* THE *TATTOO* ISN'T *DRY* YET! OH, I'M PRACTICING TO BE A *TATTOO ARTIST! CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL!* THEY SAID IT WAS A *STIFF COURSE!* GUESS I WAS *INSPIRED* BY THE TALE I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU! I CALL IT...

...ON A DEAD MAN'S CHEST!



STEVEN ANDERSON, THE WEALTHY STEAMSHIP LINE OWNER, LEANED OUT THE DOORWAY OF HIS EXPENSIVELY TILED BATHROOM AND CALLED TO HIS YOUNG AND ATTRACTIVE WIFE...

MH ANDERSON WIPED THE SHAVING CREAM FROM HIS FACE AND HURRIED THROUGH HIS SPACIOUS PENTHOUSE APARTMENT TO THE JANGLING PHONE! THE MANY TATTOOS HE'D OBTAINED YEARS BEFORE GLEAMED ON HIS NOW SAGGING MUSCLES...

H...HELLO?

STEVE? I JUST GOT BACK TO THE STATES! THIS IS LARRY!

STEVE ANDERSON.. ONE-TIME SEAMAN WHO'D WORKED HIMSELF UP TO SNIP'S CAPTAIN, THEN SNIP OWNER, THEN OWNER OF A FLEET OF CARGO BOATS... SHOUTED WITH GLEE INTO THE BLACK PHONE HE HELD IN HIS HUGE FIST...

LARRY! YOU SON-OF-A-GUN! WHY DON'T YOU LET A GUY KNOW WHEN HIS KID BROTHER'S COMING HOME?

I THOUGHT I'D SURPRISE YOU, STEVE!

SURPRISE ME? YOU COULD KNOCK ME OVER WITH A FEATHER! C'MON OVER! YOU MUST MEET HELEN, MY WIFE! HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN? LORD! FOUR YEARS, NOW! OKAY? GOOD! WE'LL SEE YOU IN AN HOUR, THEN!

STEVE! WE HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE VANDERHORNS!

MH ANDERSON HUNG UP AND TURNED TO HIS WIFE! A BROAD GRIN COVERED HIS ONCE SWARTHY FACE...

CANCEL IT, HELEN! THAT WAS MY KID BROTHER LARRY! HE JUST GOT IN! I WANT YOU TO MEET HIM! YOU'LL LOVE HIM! SEE! FOUR YEARS! I WONDER IF HE'S CHANGED MUCH!

BUT, STEVE! THE VANDERHORNS ARE VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE! COULDN'T YOUR BROTHER WAIT TILL WE GOT HOME?

NONSENSE! NO ONE'S AS IMPORTANT TO ME AS LARRY! SEE THIS TATTOO HERE? I GOT THIS IN SUMATRA THE DAY LARRY.

I KNOW! I KNOW! YOU'VE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT THOSE UGLY THINGS... A HUNDRED TIMES! WHAT CAN I TELL THE VANDERHORNS?

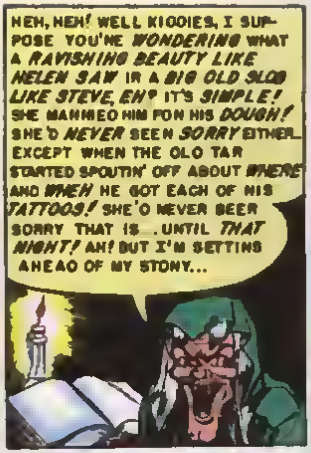
AW, BABY! DON'T BE ANGRY! WAIT'LL YOU MEET LARRY! YOU'LL SEE! YOU'LL BE CRAZY ABOUT HIM! I FEEL LIKE A FATHER TO THAT KID! I PUT HIM THROUGH SCHOOL...

DON'T YOU THINK YOU OUGHT TO FINISH SHAVING AND GET DRESSED, STEVE?

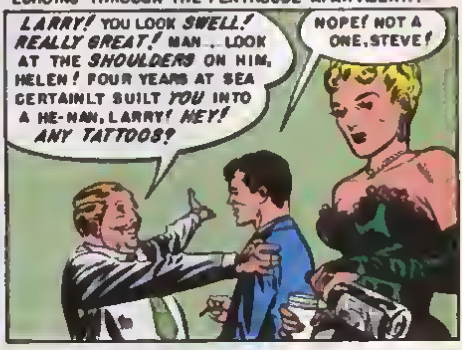
HUH? OH! YEAH! OKAY! YOU CALL THE VANDERHORNS AND MAKE OUR APOLOGIES, EH, HELEN?

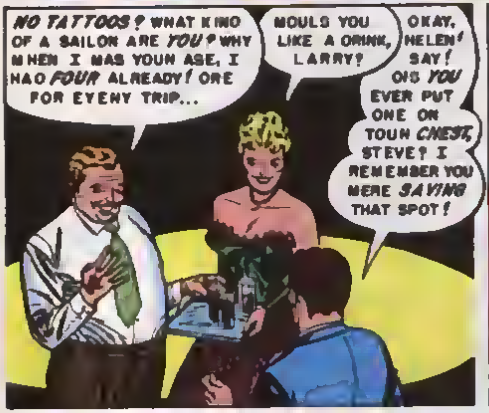
ALL RIGHT, STEVE!

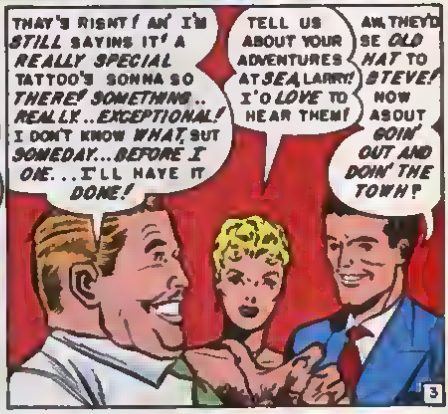
DRAT IT! GIVING UP A SOCIAL EVENING WITH THEM TO WELCOME HIS GRIMY SAILOR BROTHER..



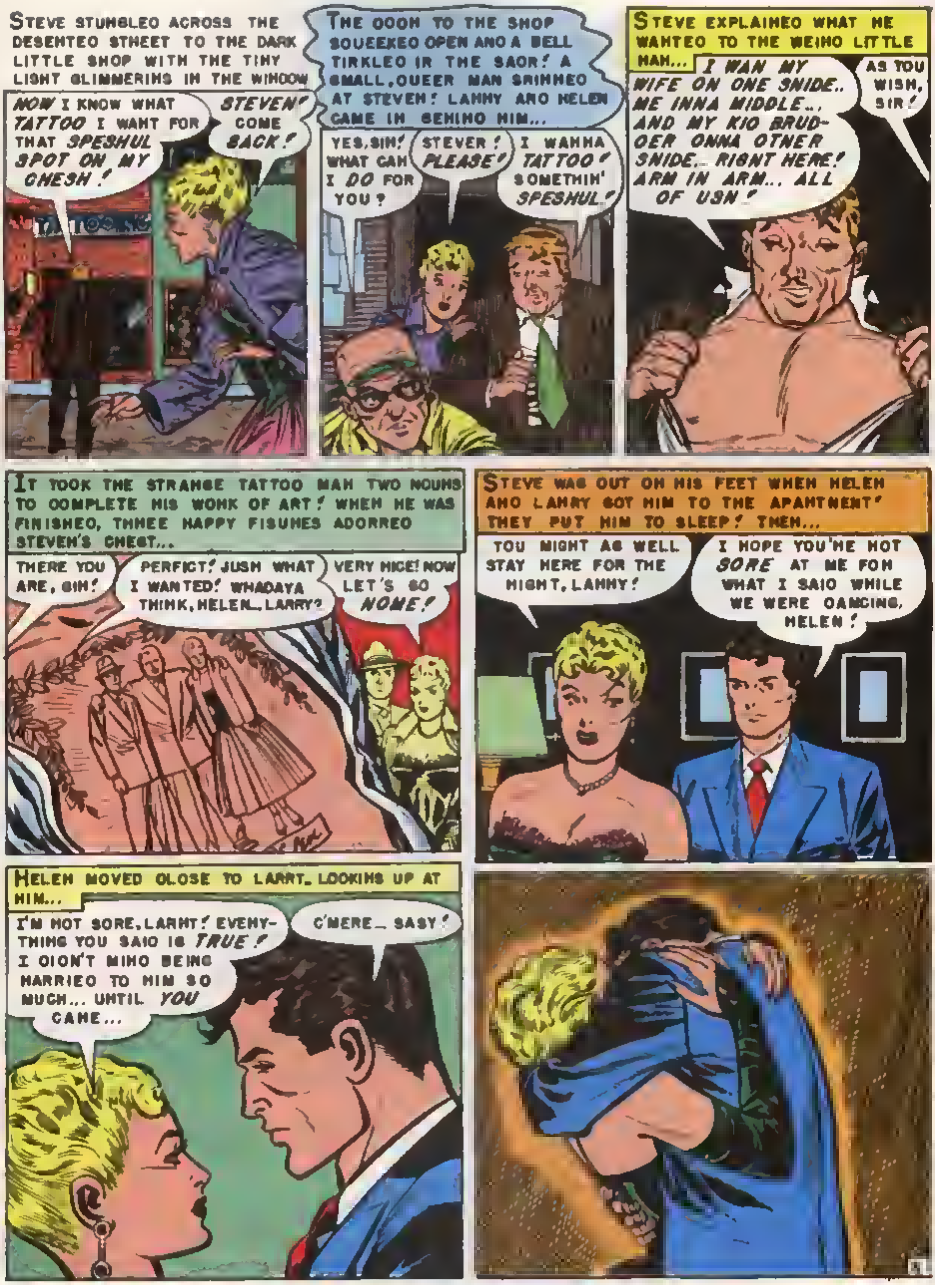
STEVE BURST INTO THE ROOM...HIS BOOMING VOICE ECHOING THROUGH THE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT..







SO STEVE TOOK HELER AHO LARRT OUT ON THE TOWN! HE WAS, REALLY HAPPY, STEVE WAS! PROUD OF HIS TOUNGER SROTHER, ARO PROUS OF HIS SEAUTIFUL WIFE! HE WAS COHTERT TO SIT AT A RISHT-CLUS TASLE AHO WATCH THEM OAHCE TOGETHER... ARO ORIHK..ARO WATCH...ARO... ORIRK...AH'...WASH... AR!..NIC
STEVE'S DRIRKIHS A LOT, LARRY! I THIHK WE'O SETTER TAKE HIM HOME!
AFTER THIS DAHCE, HELEH! SUT WHY ARE YOU WORRYING ABOUT HIM, AHTWAT? YOU OOH'T LOVE HIM!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ASOUT? OF COURSE I...
DOH'T KID ME, HELER! I SEE THE CONTEMPT YOU HAVE FOR HIM! I CAR SEE IT IR YOUR EYES! YOU WARRIED HIW FOR HIS MONEY, OIDH'T YOU?
HOW DARE YOU...
I WASH'T BORH YESTERDAY, HELEH! YOU'RE A GORGEOUS KID! TOU COULO HAVE HOOKED SOWE HAROSOME SRUTE EASILY! AHO STEVE'S RO PRIZE PACKAGE! I KHOW HIW! I'M SURPRISEO YOU'VE TOLERATED HIM AS LOHS AS YOU HAVE! HE MUST OOMIRATE YOU THE WAY HE'S ALWAYS OOMIHATED ME! I.. HATE HIM, MYSELF!
HELER BROKE AWAY FROM LARRY ARO ELSOWEO HER WAY ACROSS THE OAHCE FLOOR TO THE TABLE WHERE STEVE SAT SRIHHIRS ISIOTICALLY AT AH EWPTY HISHSALL SLASS..
COHE OH, STEVE! WE'RE SOHS HOHE!
WASHA MATTER? ISH EARLY! DOHCHA LIKE THISH PLASHE? LESH SO TO AHOJER PLASHE! THE SHOW HERE STIHKSH, ANYHOOO...
HELEH HELPED STEVE TO HIS FEET AHO SUIDED HIM OUT OF THE SMOKE-FILLED CLUS! LARRY CAUGHT UP WITH THEW OUTSIOE! HE TOOK STEVE'S OTHER ARM! HELER SLARED AT LARRT ARSRILT! HE SWILED SACK AT HER...
I'M SHO HAPPY! MY BEOOTIFUL WIFE..AR' MY KID SRUDDER! SHO HAPPY!
WHERE WE GOIH' HOW? HUH? LESH SO DOWHA SLOCK T' 'HOTHER PLASHE I KHOW..OOWHA..
HO, STEVE! TOU'RE SOIRS HOME!
THET STAGGERED ALOHS THE OAHK STREET... THE THREE OF THEM! SUDDERLT, STEVER AHDERSOH STIFFEHED! HIS FACE LIT UP...
WHAT IS IT, STEVEH? WHAT OO YOU SEE?
LOOKA THAT! A TATTOO SHOP! I REVER SHAW THAT PLASHE SEFORE! THASH IT! THASH IT!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, STEVE?
4

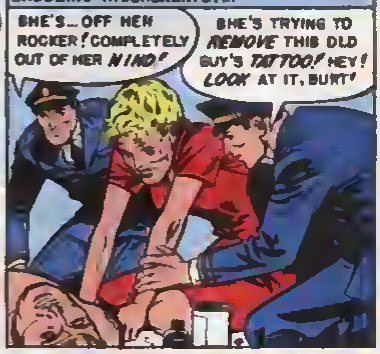

STEVE STUMBLED ACROSS THE DESERTED STREET TO THE DARK LITTLE SHOP WITH THE TINY LIGHT GLIMMERING IN THE WINDOW
NOW I KNOW WHAT TATTOO I WANT FOR THAT SPESHUL SPOT ON MY CHESH!
STEVEN! COME BACK!
THE OOOH TO THE SHOP SQUEEKED OPEN AND A BELL TINKLED IR THE SAOR! A SMALL, QUEER MAN SHIMMED AT STEVEN! LAMMY AND HELEN CAME IN BEHIND HIM...
YES, SIR! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
STEVER! PLEASE!
I WANNA TATTOO SOMETHIN' SPESHUL
STEVE EXPLAINED WHAT HE WANTED TO THE WEIRD LITTLE MAN...
I WAN MY WIFE ON ONE SNIDE.. ME INNA MIDDLE.., AND MY KID BRUDOER ONNA OTNER SNIDE... RIGHT HERE! ARM IN ARM... ALL OF USN"
AS YOU WISH, SIR!
IT TOOK THE STRANGE TATTOO MAN TWO HOURS TO COMPLETE HIS WORK OF ART! WHEN HE WAS FINISHED, THREE HAPPY FIGURES ADORNED STEVEN'S CHEST...
THERE YOU ARE, SIR!
PERFECT! JUSH WHAT I WANTED! WHADAYA THINK, HELEN, LARRY?
VERY NICE! NOW LET'S GO HOME!
STEVE WAS OUT ON HIS FEET WHEN HELEN AND LARRY GOT HIM TO THE APARTMENT! THEY PUT HIM TO SLEEP! THEN...
YOU MIGHT AS WELL STAY HERE FOR THE NIGHT, LARRY!
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT SORE AT ME FOR WHAT I SAID WHILE WE WERE DANCING, HELEN!
HELEN MOVED CLOSE TO LARRY, LOOKING UP AT HIM...
I'M NOT SORE, LARRY! EVERYTHING YOU SAID IS TRUE! I DIDN'T MIND BEING MARRIED TO HIM SO MUCH... UNTIL YOU CAME...
C'MERE... SASY!

HEH,HEH! SO LARRY 'CALLED HELEN'S NUMBER', AND SHE ANSWERED! THEIR LOVE AFFAIR GREW WARMER AND WARMER! WHENEVER STEVEN WASN'T AROUND, THEY WERE IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS! STEVE, OF COURSE, NEVER SUSPECTED! HE WAS SO HAPPY! FINALLY, THINGS REACHED THE BOILING POINT..
NO, LARRY! I WON'T DIVORCE STEVE TO MARRY YOU! HE'D THROW YOU OUT OF THE STEAMSHIP LINE... BLACK-BALL YOU! WE'D LIVE LIKE PAUPERS!
BUT, WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS, HELEN! STEVE MIGHT FIND OUT! THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY.. A WAY TO GET RID OF HIM AND STILL GET HIS DOUGH!
YOU MEAN, MURDER HIM... DON'T YOU?
EXACTLY! IT COULD LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT! HE COULD 'SLIP AND FALL' WHILE TAKING A BATH... AND SMASH HIS SKULL ON THE TILE FLOOR!
AT FIRST HELEN WAS APPALLED AT THE IDEA OF KILLING HER HUSBAND, BUT LARRY EASILY CONVINCED HER THAT IT WAS THE ONLY WAY! SO THE PLANS WERE MADE...
OH! LARRY! COME IN! I WAS JUST GOING TO TAKE A BATH! HAND ME THE SOAP, HUM?
SURE, STEVE, SURE!
SUDDENLY LARRY SPRUNG FORWARD! HE LOCKED HIS ARMS AROUND STEVEN'S CHEST, PINNING STEVEN'S HANDS BEHIND HIM..
LARRY! WHAT THE...? WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU DOING?
ALL RIGHT, HELEN!
HOLD HIM, LARRY! HOLD HIM...
STEVE STRUGGLED TO FREE HIMSELF, BUT LARRY HELD HIM FAST! HELEN BROUGHT THE HEAVY CLUB DOWN ON STEVE'S SKULL AGAIN AND AGAIN. FINALLY THE FLABBY SHIP-LINE OWNER WENT LIMP.. HIS HEAD A SOGGY, OOZING MASS OF RED...
THAT'S ENOUGH, HELEN! THAT'S ENOUGH! HE'S DEAD!
GASP... GASP— JUST ONE MORE.. JUST ONE...
LARRY LET HIS BROTHER SLIP TO THE BLOOD-SPATTERED TILE FLOOR! HE SNATCHED THE CLUB FROM HELEN'S HAND AND HURRIED DOWN TO THE CELLAR WITH IT! HE TOSSED IT INTO THE ROARING FURNACE AND WATCHED IT BURN TO A CRISP! THEN HE WENT BACK UPSTAIRS AND PHONED THE POLICE.
THIS IS LARRY ANDERSON! I'M CALLING FROM MY BROTHER'S APARTMENT! YOU'D BETTER COME QUICKLY! THERE'S BEEN A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
6

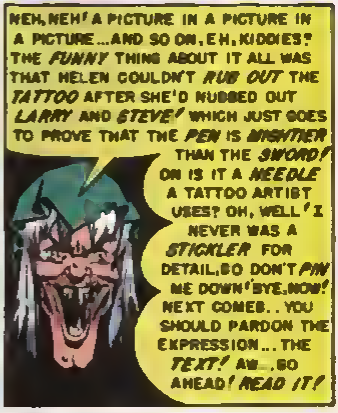
HELEN'S HORRIFIED SHRIEK ECHOED THROUGH THE HOUSE! LARRY FINISHED GIVING THE POLICE THE INFORMATION...THAT STEVE HAD SLIPPED AND FALLEN WHILE TAKING A BATH! THEN HE HUNG UP AND RUSHED TO THE BATHROOM...

THE TINY PISTOL IN HELEN'S HAND BARKED TWICE...AND LARRY CRUMPLED FORWARD, FACE DOWN, TO THE TILE FLOOR...

BUT WHEN THE POLICE CAME, THEY FOUND HELEN SITTING BESIDE STEVE'S BODY... SURROUNDED BY ACIDS, AMMONIA, BLEACHES, AND SANDPAPER! SHE WAS BABBLING INCOHERENTLY...



THE TATTOO ON STEVE'S CHEST HAD CHANGED! IT NO LONGER DEPICTED THE THREE OF THEM ARM IN ARM! INSTEAD, IT SHOWED LARRY HOLDING STEVE FAST, WHILE HELEN STRUCK HIM WITH A CLUB! AND ON THE CHEST OF THE TATTOED FIGURE OF STEVE WAS A TINY TATTOO! IT SHOWED LARRY HOLDING STEVE FAST, WHILE HELEN STRUCK HIM WITH A CLUB! AND ON THE CHEST...



President and CEO—Stephen A. Geppi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear OW

I loved ' Extermination" (HAUNT 10) "Ear Today Gone Tomorrow! ' was another great story I have e question Why can t you order 'The Complete Haunt ' from Russ Cochran? I know there is one because I have Vol 1 of it But it's not on the order form I agree with David C Dalin and Patty Drummond (HAUNT 9) that you should rerun "Artist of the Issue " features of the 50's.

John Brown — Harriman TN

Ah, but you CAN order the hardback EC LIBRARY component, "The Complete Haunt!" All five volumes! Spend money! Be popular (with us)! —OW

[To whom it may concern?].

The Vault-Keeper The Old Witch, and the Crypt-Keeper I was wondering if these guys are triplets or something like that? I mean they all have a big mole on their chins.

I think that your HAUNT OF FEAR series is not very good except for that one story ' My Uncle Ekar" It's really awesome especially at the end. By the way I am a real good fan of all three of the hosts. Please don't ever go out of business!!! Your Buddy

Derek Steed 12 years old — Alliance, OH

"Ekar" (HAUNT 10) has many fans, but you're my first fan who doesn't like my book!

The Crypt-Keeper and The Vault-Keeper have moles, I have a beauty mark! —OW

[If we have moles, YOU have a GOPHER!! —CK & VK]

"[redacted]" —OW

Dear Old Witch

I loved the story 'Grave Business!' in HAUNT 10 I love all of you guys, especially the Crypt-Keeper Could you ask him if he could send me an autographed copy of CRYPT? I like scary books like GOOSEBUMPS I like werewolfs, too I m nine years old and one of your biggest fans!

Elliot Britz — Wisconsin Rapids WI

GOOSEBUMPS is a series of scary story books for the youngest set, ain't it? Heh-heh, you thought I'd be too old to be hep, eh? Unlike CK, I read books WITHOUT pictures! —OW

Dear OW.

Great job on HAUNT #10, the front cover of the book was great! I also loved all the stories in the book! On the "Crypt ' show I saw "Dig The! Cat He a Real Gone!" I can't wait till that story appears in HAUNT Another story I liked from one of your books was 'Stained In Horror!" I liked the end of the story when you were sliding down the spiral staircase, after I read that story I tried to slide down my staircase but fell off the balcony! I would love to have HAUNT #1 but I can t find it anywhere!

Martyn Reid — Wardley, ENGLAND

Hoo-hoo! Dig this, Cat, HAUNT #1 is not real gone!

WE'VE got copies, see the details at the end of this column. "Stained" was MY story in VAULT 12. "Dig" will be in HAUNT 21. (PS: After my close encounter with the newel post on that staircase, I'd rather have fallen off the balcony!) —OW

Dear OW,

I have a question for you that I've been meaning to ask for some time now CK and VK have their own little—shall we say houses Why don't you? I mean, if those guys get their own Crypt and Vault, then why can't you have a mausoleum or something? I think you should file a complaint Get liberated, girl! It's the 90s! Women have rights too! If it weren't for us hard-workin' women, men wouldn't be here! Take action, honey! Show them that you're not just an Old Witch!

Audrey Sheehan

Now that I'm an employee of Gemstone, I've moved out of the Dumpster and into a Port-o-John. No glass ceiling here! —OW

What is different about the EC comics is they were so imaginative and well thought out I really enjoy reading them and then a year or so down the road they are fun to read again

I also wanted to tell you about my 'Kids ' who really like me to read them the science fiction ECs " The Kids' are characters I paint and write about for children [They] are Jerry Giraffe Little Lambchop Baby Robby Rabbit and Diennah Dinosaur and they all live with me, Ranger Gary Michael, in my Magical Park.

Here [is a] picture of them

Gary Michael Lewis — Santa Rosa, CA

Your color photo of your full color painting may look murky here, sorry! You also included your 1994 Christmas letter featuring a story with The Kids and Ranger Gary, for which we thank you! —OW

© 1992 Gary Michael Lewis

Dear OW,

I'd like to compliment you on a job well-done. I've been a subscriber for a couple of years and this is my first letter to you (I am ashamed of myself). So please be gentle, don't be too angry.

I remember the first time I ever picked up THE HAUNT OF FEAR. I was feeling depressed. My hubby was working late, our air conditioner had broken down and it was hot outside, there was nothing good on Cable and I remembered that a friend of mine had given me a comic book. She said you were unusual. So I dug it out of the garbage can and started to read it. I LOVED IT!

So I subscribed. Do you know what makes that night even more memorable? After I read the HAUNT, a thunderstorm with lightning started and the power went off!

Jana Buterbaugh — Columbus, OH

A bolt from the blue enlightened you! —OW

HEY HORRORHEADS & EC FAN-ADDICTS! HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR, EC's only officially authorized fanzine (still in production) is MOVING. Our new muck-mag mailing address is: Sam Kingston's HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR, 2648 East Manor Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121.

Don't miss our latest putrid publication! Issue #4 is available for $3.00 ($5.00 foreign) with lots of nauseating nuggets of bile vile for EC junkies!!! #5 will be available in late July and will feature a brand new Johnny Craig cover being designed for HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR! Don't miss this one! Pre-order your copy today!!

We also welcome with freshly opened arms your comments, art suggestions, stories and anything you might want to acknowledge regarding your love for the EC horror comics. So drop us a line and/or send for the zine. Take scare!!! Sam Kingston's HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR, 2648 East Manor Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121.

Dear Russ,

Firstly, thank you for reprinting ECs!! You're doing the comic world (good by) bringing these hidden treasures to light. I first came across them in a comic shop's EC section. I bought every one they had (mostly RCP and GLAD 64-pgers).

Shortly thereafter I became wise to the 32-pg sequentials! I love it! Keep printing them! The Annuals are an ingenious idea.

As far as my favorites: SHOCK, TWO-FISTED and VAULT OF CRYPT is just too creepy! Your choice to do FRONTLINE was wise; now there will be 2 war, 2 suspense, 2 sci-fi, 3 horror—and no humor! Please try to get PANIC in the lineup. I've already gotten #s 1, 2, 3 & 6 (originals) and seeing them reissued would save me a lot of money and wear-and-tear on mine. You can print my address. I need pen-pals. I'm starved. How about a nice fat delivery boy?!

Christian Duckworth — 5015 Westheimer #1504, Houston, TX 77056

And maybe I'll send my recipe for curried courier, messenger I'marinade and poached postperson on toast! Bon appetit! —OW

Dear Old Witch,

The HAUNT OF FEAR #11 was another winner! The stories were mesmerizing and unpredictable. The EC horror titles are some of the best entertainment around. They are the epitome of comic book terror. Any one of these tales could be made into full-length motion pictures, and be potential Oscar winners. "Entertaining Comics," indeed! These tales are so gripping that even when you read them over and over, they're still as exciting as the first time you read them.

And Old Witch, you're not ugly at all. You're great. At least to a vampire like me you are. What say you and I grab lunch at Chez Dracula some time?

Well, like the Beatles said: "Here Comes The Sun," and that means it's time for me to go, otherwise I'll be dehydrated and scorched by that burning sunlight. But before I go, my dear Old Witch, please print the address to my doom-icile, as I like to hear from fans from around the globe. Thanks, Witchy-Witchy!

Tony Martinez, age 17 — 6041 S California AV, Chicago, IL 60629

At Chez Drac, you grab lunch on the run! —OW

Dear Old Witch,

(You're my favorite.) I've been reading the EC comics since they first appeared in the 50s. My mother would destroy them so to prevent that I would staple covers from "acceptable" comics over the EC comic. When I was in college, I did a Baccalaureate essay on the discrimination against EC comics during the 1960s.

I own CRYPT, SHOCK, CRIME and PANIC in the hardbound editions. I'm going to complete my collection with the current line of comics you're publishing. These comic books are the greatest thing that has ever been published in the history of comics! They are better than the originals!!! I hope you can do the entire line. Do you think you really can? It would be an honor to have my letter published in your comic 'cause you're the greatest.

Jim Armstrong — Penn Yan, NY

Dear People,

I want to say hello and that I really like your books. They're certainly better than half the stuff some of the bigger companies put out. Especially better than DC. I mean, how many times will they kill poor Supes off?

George Taylor — Cassatt, SC

Once per 50 years, is my guess—not counting "imaginary stories!" —OW

Also available this month are the new addition to the EC reprint line, FRONTLINE COMBAT, and CRIME. Watch for CRYPT, WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK next month. Don't forget VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED! Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details)!

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, $3 each (subject to availability). All others up thru issue #3, $1.50 each. Issues #4 and up, $3 each. Don't forget the entire 11-issue run of WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY/INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION! Add $5 per order ($15 outside US) for P&H.

We want letters! Write to:
HAUNT
GEMSTONE
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS
HAUNT OF FEAR #12 (MAR/APR 1952)

COVER by Graham Ingels

"Poetic Justice!"	Graham Ingels
"...On a Dead Man's Chest!"	Johnny Craig
"Till Death Do We Part!"	Joe Orlando
"What a Cookin'?"	Jack Davis

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters. To do so we mail your address on the published letter.

Enclosed is a drawing that you might like to include on your "Fine Arts" page. It was inspired by Little Freddy in "The Martian Monster" from WEIRD SCIENCE #9

Hans Rickheit — Brattleboro, VT

Yow! Even I had second thoughts about running this illo, till I read the story in question. Little Freddy was a standup dude, just misinformed! And, to judge from this drawing, a trifle MALFORMED, too! Ah, well, that's the way it goes in THE CRYPT-KEEPER's PAGE OF..

FINE ARTS #31

Dear Mr. Cochran,

Your EC "comics" are awful. The artwork is awful and the stories are outrageous and stupid. Any idiot could draw and write better. The only reason I subscribe to all 9 titles is to read the dumb letters pages and for the artwork in the Fine Arts pages.

In protest, I also buy extra copies of each title at the shop and rip them to shreds in front of everyone while announcing "EC Comics are awful and only morons read this trash." However, I save the "Fine Arts" and letters pages. Disgusted,

Ron Silay — North Riverside, IL

We're of two minds on you here, Ron. Ed Anon (the anonymous editor, who puts together the locols & this page) sends a rousing cheer and two huzzahs. We GhoulLunatics were going to lynch you till we realized you PAY FOR the comics before you trash them! But be forewarned, you're walking the fine line!
—CK

I have enclosed a poem. I hope you find it "enjoyable." Please print my address.

EATING ETIQUETTE

I eat eyeballs bloody
I've done it all my life
It makes them taste kind of funny,
But it keeps them on my knife
And when the blood becomes dry,
I give the bloody knife a little lick
And place the eyeballs back on,
And the blood makes them stick!

Brandon Hendrix — POB 117, Broken Bow, OK

Careful licking that knife, or you'll wind up reading poetry with forked tongue! (Y'know, I'm kinda glad there isn't an illo for this pome!)
—CK

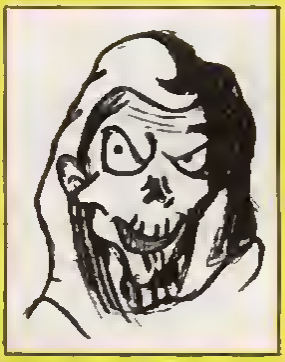
Send your contribs (not returnable, not too long, not too big, legible doublespaced text &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit!) to:

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S
PAGE OF FINE ARTS
GEMSTONE
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

We welcome contributions. We cannot promise to return, acknowledge or publish contributions. We edit for clarity, accuracy and size. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication, to do so we need your address on the individual contribution.

Grant Smith, Stamford, CT; after Jack Davis.

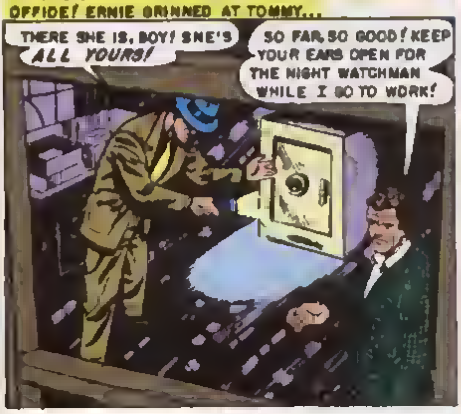
Elola Radke (" print my address ") 3225 E Baseline #2061, Gilbert, AZ 85234; after Al Feldstein.



Ramiro J. Roman, Glendale, CA; after HBO.

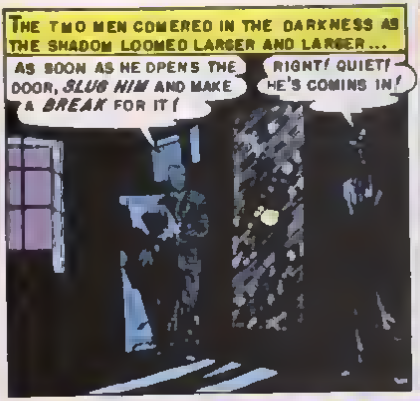
Although I try to weed out obvious swipes, I enjoyed these three takes on the three versions of me, each has an individual style in rendering. And, the subject is fascinating!
—CK

THE YELLOW CIRCLE OF LIGHT SHOT FROM ERNIE'S FLASHLIGHT AND SLAMMED AGAINST THE DARKENED OFFICE! ERNIE GRINNED AT TOMMY...



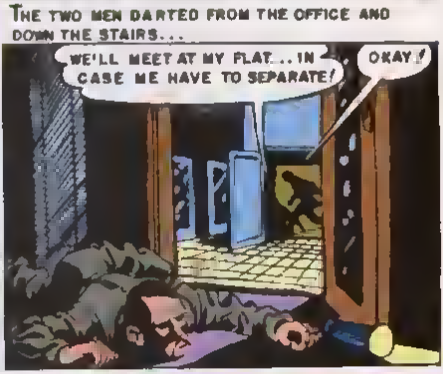
THE ONE CALLED TOMMY TOOK THE FLASHLIGHT FROM THE ONE CALLED ERNIE AND MOVED TOWARD THE SAFE! HE KNELT DOWN BEFORE IT AND OPENED THE SMALL BLACK BAG...

TOMMY TOOK A SMALL PIECE OF EMERY CLOTH FROM THE BLACK BAG AND SCRAPED TO RUB HIS FINGERTIPS WITH IT! THE SCRATCHY SOUND ECHOED THROUGH THE GLOOM
MAKE 'EM SOOD AND SENSITIVE, KID!
DON'T WORRY! I WILL! I WANT THAT THIRTY GRAND AS MUCH AS YOU DO!
TOMMY EDGED UP CLOSE TO THE SAFE, PRESSING HIS EAR AGAINST IT! HE BEGAN TO TURN THE CALIBRATED KNOB WITH HIS RAW FINGERS...
TOUGH ONE, TOMMY?
NOT BAD! NEEDS AN OILING, SO IT'LL BE EASY!
THE OFFICE WAS SILENT EXCEPT FOR THE HEAVY BREATHING OF THE TWO MEN! ERNIE STRAINED HIS EARS... LISTENING...
IT'S ELEVEN-TWENTY, TOMMY! NOW'S IT COMIN'?
TAKE IT EASY! I'M GETTIN' IT!
THE SWEEP-SECOND-HAND OF ERNIE'S WRIST WATCH DANCED SWIFTLY AROUND THE DIAL! ONE MINUTE... TWO... THREE! ERNIE LIT A CIGARETTE NERVOUSLY...
YUH GOT LESS THAN EIGHT MINUTES, TOMMY!
SHUT UP, HUH? I'M WORKIN' AS FAST AS I CAN!
SUDDENLY A SHARP CLICK RESOUNDED THROUGH THE BLACKNESS! TOMMY HEAVED A SIGH OF RELIEF! HE SWUNG OPEN THE HEAVY THICK DOOR...
THERE YUARE, ERNIE!
HURRY! SRAB THE DOUGH WE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE TET!
TOMMY BEGAN TO STUFF THE NEATLY BANDED PACKETS OF CRISP GREEN BILLS INTO THE SMALL BLACK BAG! SOON THE SAFE WAS EMPTY AND THE SATCHEL BULGED FULL...
OKAY! GOT IT ALL! LET'S BLOW!
C'MON! WE'LL HEAD FOR THE BACK STAIRS AND.. LISTEN! FOOTSTEPS!
THE TWO MEN STIFFENED! HEAVY FOOTFALLS APPROACHED OUTSIDE THE OFFICE DOOR! THE BLACK SHADOW OF A MAN IN A PEAKED CAP FELL ACROSS THE DULL GRAY TRANSLUCENT GLASS...
THE NIGHT WATCHMAN!
THE @!!*?@H IS EARLY! IT'S ONLY ELEVEN TWENTY-SIX!
2


THE TWO MEN COWERED IN THE DARKNESS AS THE SHADOW LOOMED LARGER AND LARGER...
AS SOON AS HE OPENS THE DOOR, SLUG HIM AND MAKE A BREAK FOR IT!
RIGHT! QUIET! HE'S COMING IN!

THE BRASS KNOB TURNED AND THE DOOR SWUNG INWARD! A UNIFORMED WATCHMAN PEERED INTO THE GLOOM! THE
WHAT THE...! WHY, THE SAFE'S BEEN...
GET HIM, ERNIE!

ERNIE BROUGHT THE SLACK-JACK DOWN ON THE WATCHMAN'S HEAD WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH, AND THE GRAY-CLAD GUARD CRUMPLED TO THE FLOOR
THUMP

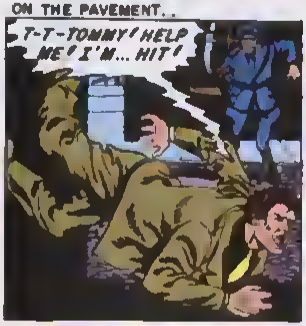

THE TWO MEN DARTED FROM THE OFFICE AND DOWN THE STAIRS...
WE'LL MEET AT MY FLAT... IN CASE WE HAVE TO SEPARATE!
OKAY!

SUDDENLY THE BUILDING WAS FILLED WITH THE EAR-SPLITTING CLANGING OF BELLS...
THE ALARM! SOMEBODY SET OFF THE ALARM!
THE WATCHMAN! YOU DIDN'T HIT HIM HARD ENOUGH!
CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-

THE SAFE-ROBBERS HURTLED DOWN THE REMAINING FLIGHT OF STEPS THREE AT A TIME! THEY BURST THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR OUT INTO THE COLD NIGHT AIR...
LOOK!
A SQUAD CAR!

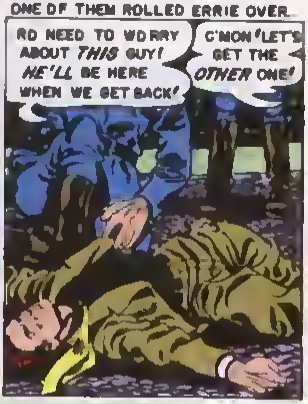
THE DESERTED STREET WAS FILLED WITH THE SOUNDS OF RUNNING FEET AND SHOUTING VOICES...
THERE THEY GO!
STOP OR WE SHOOT!
CLANG-CLANG-

SHOTS RANG OUT! THE EXPLOSIONS ECHOED OFF THE FACES OF THE SILENT BUILDINGS! ERNIE FELT A SEARING PAIN AS A RED-HOT SLUG STRUCK HIM BETWEEN THE SHOULDER BLADES...RIPPING INTO HIS CHEST! HE STUMBLED FORWARD...COLLAPSING ON THE PAVEMENT..

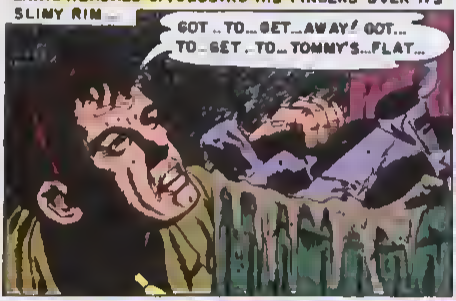


TOMMY'S HAMMERING FOOTSTEPS FADED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT! ERRIE LAY FACE DOWNWARD IN THE GUTTER..CHOKING OUT A CRY AFTER HIS FLEEING PARTNER..

SILENCE CLOSED IN! THEN ERNIE HEARD THE CLATTER OF FEET AS THE POLICEMEN CAME UP TO HIM! ONE OF THEM ROLLED ERRIE OVER..

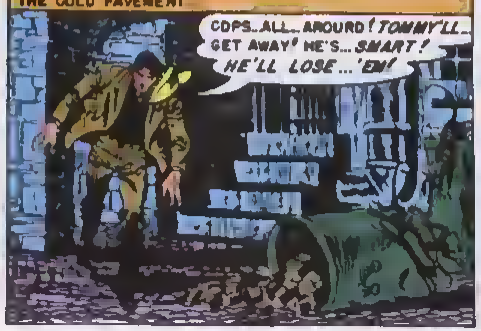


THE COPS HURRIED AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS! WHAT A BREAK! THIS WAS ERNIE'S CHANCE! HE LOOKED UP! AN ASH CAN TOWERED OVER HIM, HEAPED WITH LITTER! ERNIE REACHED UP, CLOSING HIS FINGERS OVER ITS SLIMY RIM..



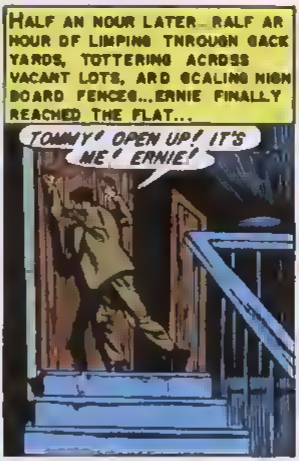
ERRIE USED EVERY OUNCE OF HIS STRENGTH TO PULL HIMSELF TO HIS FEET! FOR A FLEETING MOMENT, HE HAD THE HORRIBLE FEAR THAT HE COULDN'T MAKE IT! BUT FINALLY...WITH A TREMENDOUS EFFORT...HE STOOD SWAYING IN THE SHIVERY WIND .

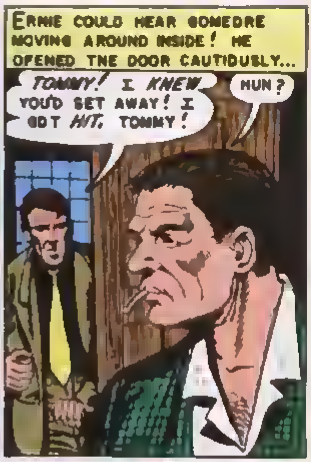
ERRIE STAGGERED OFF DOWN A DANK ALLEY! NATS SCURRIED AWAY AS HE DRAGGED HIMSELF ALONG! BACK ON THE STREET, HE COULD HEAR THE SOUNDS OF POLICE-WHISTLES, AND RIGHT-STICKS CRACKING ON THE COLD PAVEMENT..

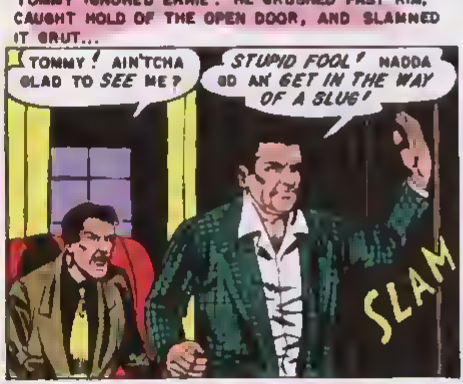


ERNIE STUMBLED DOWN THE ALLEY...FORCED HIMSELF THROUGH A BROKEN FENCE AND DARTED ACROSS AN OPEN LOT! HE PEERED AROUND A BUILDING...

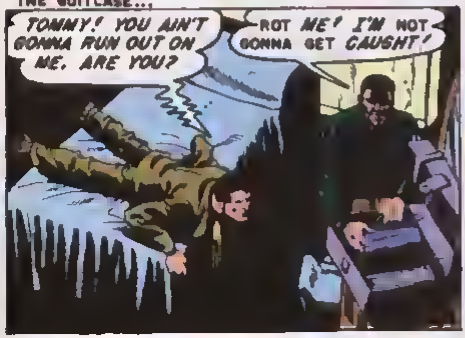
NO ONE WAS IN SIGHT! ERNIE DASHED ACROSS THE COBBLE-STONED GUTTER AND INTO ANOTHER ALLEY...
GASP...GASP! EVERY-THING'S...GONNA...BE...ALL RIGHT...NOW!

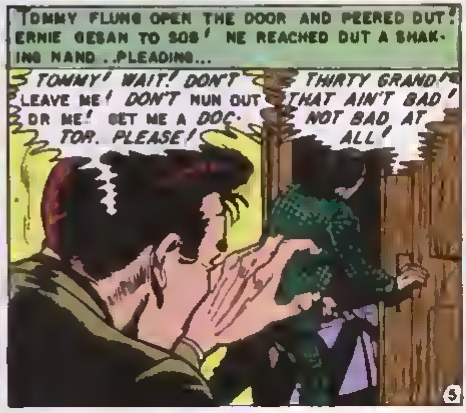

HALF AN HOUR LATER...HALF AN HOUR OF LIMPING THROUGH BACK YARDS, TOTTERING ACROSS VACANT LOTS, AND SCALING HIGH BOARD FENCES...ERNIE FINALLY REACHED THE FLAT...
TOMMY! OPEN UP! IT'S ME! ERNIE!

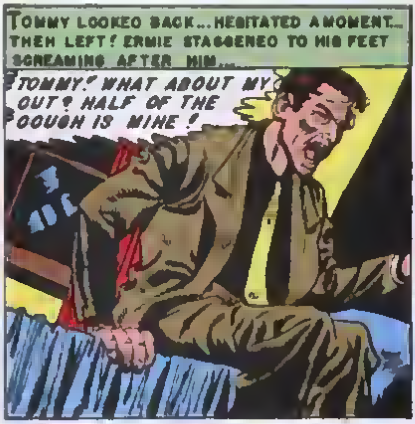

ERNIE COULD HEAR SOMEONE MOVING AROUND INSIDE! HE OPENED THE DOOR CAUTIOUSLY...
TOMMY! I KNEW YOU'D GET AWAY! I GOT HIT, TOMMY!
HUH?


TOMMY IGNORED ERNIE! HE BRUSHED PAST HIM, CAUGHT HOLD OF THE OPEN DOOR, AND SLAMMED IT SHUT...
TOMMY! AIN'TCHA GLAD TO SEE ME?
STUPID FOOL! NADDA GO AN' GET IN THE WAY OF A SLUG!
SLAM

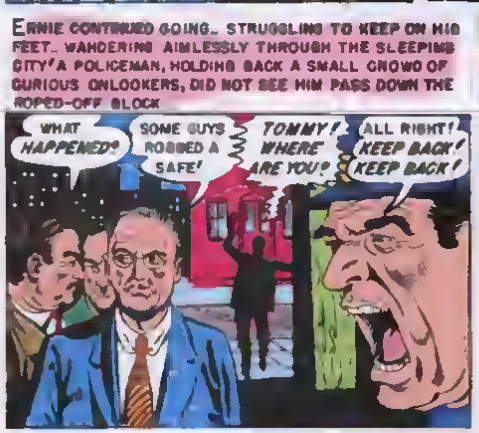
ERNIE SHUFFLED TO THE COT AND FELL ACROSS IT...
YUH GOTTA GET ME A DOCTOR, TOMMY I'M DYIN'
WELL, I AIN'T GONNA HANG AROUND HERE! I'M GONNA HEAD FOR THE BORDER!

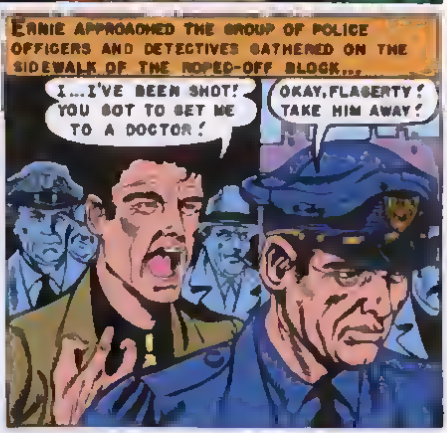

TOMMY HURRIEDLY BEGAN TO PACK A BAG! HE PICKED UP THE SMALL BLACK SATCHEL FILLED WITH THE STOLEN BILLS AND STUFFED IT INTO THE SUITCASE...
TOMMY! YOU AIN'T GONNA RUN OUT ON ME, ARE YOU?
NOT ME! I'M NOT GONNA GET CAUGHT!

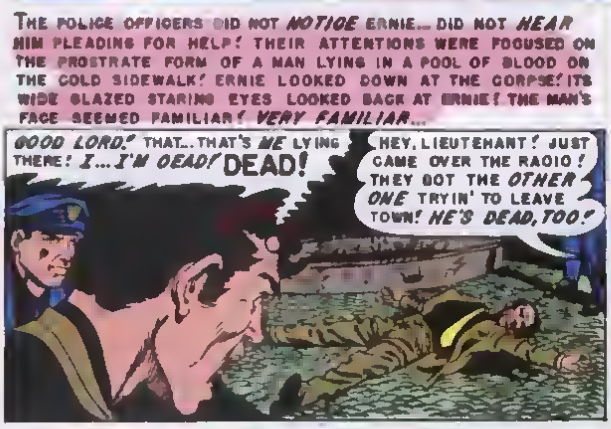

TOMMY FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR AND PEERED OUT! ERNIE BEGAN TO SOB! HE REACHED OUT A SHAKING HAND..PLEADING...
TOMMY! WAIT! DON'T LEAVE ME! DON'T RUN OUT ON ME! GET ME A DOC-TOR, PLEASE!
THIRTY GRAND! THAT AIN'T BAD! NOT BAD AT ALL!

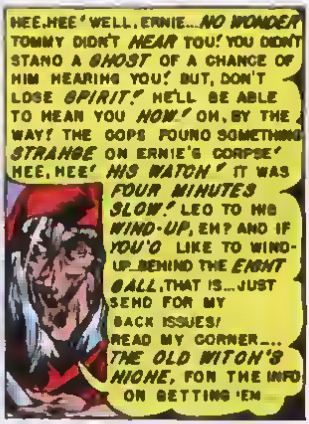

TOMMY LOOKED BACK... HESITATED A MOMENT... THEN LEFT! ERNIE STAGGERED TO HIS FEET SCREAMING AFTER HIM...
TOMMY! WHAT ABOUT MY CUT? HALF OF THE DOUGH IS MINE!

WHEN ERNIE REACHED THE STREET, TOMMY WAS NOWHERE IN SIGHT! ERNIE STUMBLED ALONG... CALLING HIM! PEOPLE PASSING ERNIE SEEMED NOT TO NOTICE THE HYSTERICAL FUGITIVE...
TOMMY! COME BACK! DON'T LEAVE ME! DON'T LEAVE ME!


ERNIE CONTINUED GOING.. STRUGGLING TO KEEP ON HIS FEET.. WANDERING AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE SLEEPING CITY! A POLICEMAN, HOLDING BACK A SMALL CROWD OF CURIOUS ONLOOKERS, DID NOT SEE HIM PASS DOWN THE ROPED-OFF BLOCK
WHAT HAPPENED?
SOME GUYS ROBBED A SAFE!
TOMMY! WHERE ARE YOU?
ALL RIGHT! KEEP BACK! KEEP BACK!


ERNIE APPROACHED THE GROUP OF POLICE OFFICERS AND DETECTIVES GATHERED ON THE SIDEWALK OF THE ROPED-OFF BLOCK...
I... I'VE BEEN SHOT! YOU GOT TO GET ME TO A DOCTOR!
OKAY, FLAGERTY! TAKE HIM AWAY!


THE POLICE OFFICERS DID NOT NOTICE ERNIE... DID NOT HEAR HIM PLEADING FOR HELP! THEIR ATTENTIONS WERE FOCUSED ON THE PROSTRATE FORM OF A MAN LYING IN A POOL OF BLOOD ON THE COLD SIDEWALK! ERNIE LOOKED DOWN AT THE CORPSE! ITS WIDE GLAZED STARING EYES LOOKED BACK AT ERNIE! THE MAN'S FACE SEEMED FAMILIAR! VERY FAMILIAR...
GOOD LORD! THAT... THAT'S ME LYING THERE! I... I'M DEAD! DEAD!
HEY, LIEUTENANT! JUST CAME OVER THE RADIO! THEY GOT THE OTHER ONE TRYIN' TO LEAVE TOWN! HE'S DEAD, TOO!


HEE, HEE! WELL, ERNIE... NO WONDER TOMMY DIDN'T HEAR YOU! YOU DIDN'T STAND A GHOST OF A CHANCE OF HIM HEARING YOU! BUT, DON'T LOSE SPIRIT! HE'LL BE ABLE TO HEAR YOU NOW! OH, BY THE WAY! THE COPS FOUND SOMETHING STRANGE ON ERNIE'S CORPSE! HEE, HEE! HIS WATCH! IT WAS FOUR MINUTES SLOW! LEO TO HIS WIND-UP, EH? AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO WIND-UP BEHIND THE EIGHT BALL, THAT IS... JUST SEND FOR MY BACK ISSUES! READ MY CORNER... THE OLD WITCH'S NICHE, FOR THE INFO ON GETTING 'EM

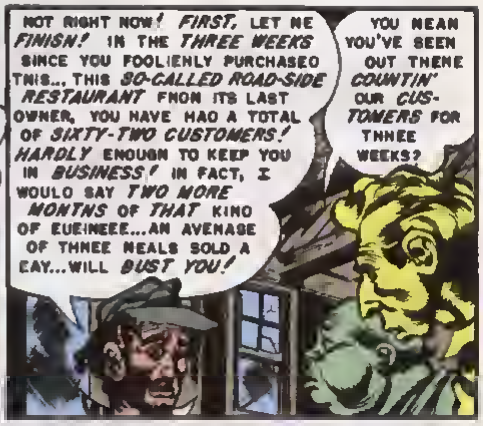
THE CRYPT OF TERROR

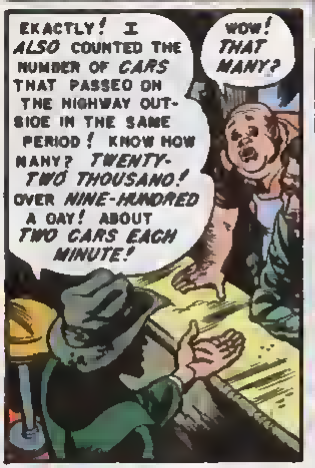
HEH, HEH! I SEE BY YOUR *DROOLING FACES* THAT YOU'RE *HUNGRY* FOR ANOTHER *TERROR-TALE* FROM MY COLLECTION HERE IN *THE CRYPT!* WELL, *THIS* ONE OUGHT TO SATISFY YOUR *APPETITE!* YES, IT'S *ME*... *THE CRYPT-KEEPER*, YOUR *HOST* IN *THE CRYPT OF TERROR!* COME IN! I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU A YARN GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOUR *HAIR STAND ON END* AND YOUR *BLOOD FREEZE IN YOUR*.. AW, *YOU* KNOW THE OLD OIL! *OIL!* THAT REMINDS ME OF *DEEP-FAT-FRYING*.. WHICH IS WHAT OUR STORY CONCERNS ITSELF WITH! THAT AND *BARBECUING!* I CALL THIS *DELICIOUS DELIRIUM DELVING*...

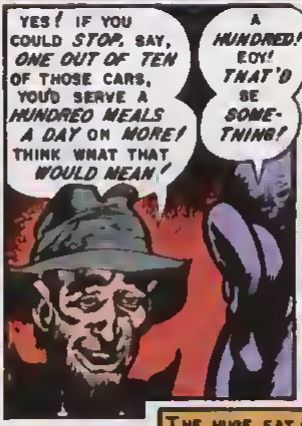
WHAT'S COOKIN'?

THE SHABBILY-DRESSED MAN PLODS UP TO THE ROADSIDE EATING-PLACE, PUSHES OPEN THE RICKETY SCREEN DOOR, LETS IT SLAM RESOUNDINGLY BEHIND HIM, AND LOOKS AROUND! HIS GAZE SHIFTS.. FROM THE EMPTY TABLES AND CHAIRS TO THE SAWDUST-COVERED FLOOR... TO THE COUNTER WITH ITS LINE OF EMPTY STOOLS.. TO THE GLARING FACES OF THE FOOD-STAND'S TWO PROPRIETORS...

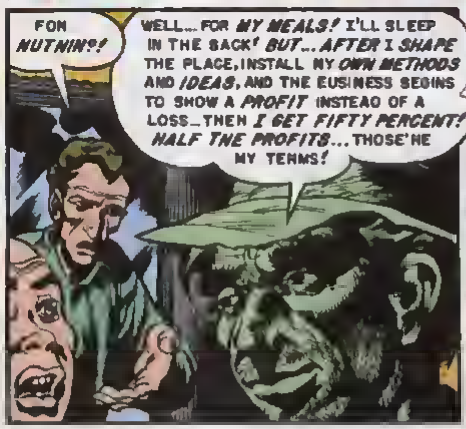
THE ONE WITH THE TATTERED CLOTHES SHAKES HIS HEAD AND SMILES AT THE TWO BEHIND THE COUNTER...
YOU ARE WRONG, GENTLEMEN! I AM NOT THE ONE WHO IS LOOKING FOR A HANDOUT! YOU ARE! THIS PLACE IS A FAILURE. ISN'T IT?
NONE OF YER BUSINESS!
YOU WANT SOMETHIN' TO EAT... OR DON'T YOU?

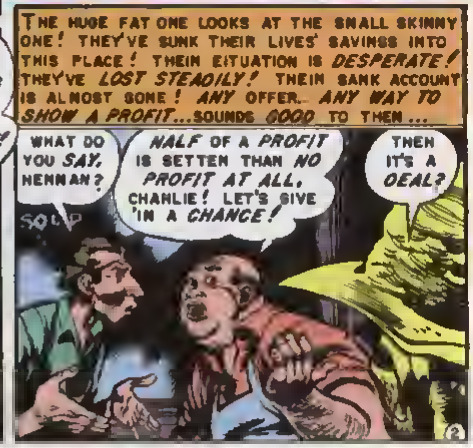

NOT RIGHT NOW! FIRST, LET ME FINISH! IN THE THREE WEEKS SINCE YOU FOOLISHLY PURCHASED THIS... THIS SO-CALLED ROAD-SIDE RESTAURANT FROM ITS LAST OWNER, YOU HAVE HAD A TOTAL OF SIXTY-TWO CUSTOMERS! HARDLY ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU IN BUSINESS! IN FACT, I WOULD SAY TWO MORE MONTHS OF THAT KIND OF EXISTENCE... AN AVERAGE OF THREE MEALS SOLD A DAY... WILL BUST YOU!
YOU MEAN YOU'VE BEEN OUT THERE COUNTIN' OUR CUSTOMERS FOR THREE WEEKS?


EXACTLY! I ALSO COUNTED THE NUMBER OF CARS THAT PASSED ON THE HIGHWAY OUTSIDE IN THE SAME PERIOD! KNOW HOW MANY? TWENTY-TWO THOUSAND! OVER NINE-HUNDRED A DAY! ABOUT TWO CARS EACH MINUTE!
WOW! THAT MANY?


YES! IF YOU COULD STOP, SAY, ONE OUT OF TEN OF THOSE CARS, YOU'D SERVE A HUNDRED MEALS A DAY OR MORE! THINK WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN!
A HUNDRED! BOY! THAT'D BE SOMETHING!

YEAH, SMART GUY! HOW YOU GONNA STOP 'IM?
THAT... GENTLEMEN... IS MY SECRET! AND MY OFFER IS VERY SIMPLE! I'LL WORK FOR NOTHING UNTIL THIS PLACE SHOWS A PROFIT!


FOR NUTHIN'?!
WELL... FOR MY MEALS! I'LL SLEEP IN THE BACK! BUT... AFTER I SHAPE THE PLACE, INSTALL MY OWN METHODS AND IDEAS, AND THE BUSINESS BEGINS TO SHOW A PROFIT INSTEAD OF A LOSS... THEN I GET FIFTY PERCENT! HALF THE PROFITS... THOSE'RE MY TERMS!


THE HUGE FAT ONE LOOKS AT THE SMALL SKINNY ONE! THEY'VE SUNK THEIR LIVES' SAVINGS INTO THIS PLACE! THEIR SITUATION IS DESPERATE! THEY'VE LOST STEADILY! THEIR BANK ACCOUNT IS ALMOST GONE! ANY OFFER... ANY WAY TO SHOW A PROFIT... SOUNDS GOOD TO THEM...
WHAT DO YOU SAY, HERMAN?
SOLD
HALF OF A PROFIT IS BETTER THAN NO PROFIT AT ALL, CHARLIE! LET'S GIVE 'IM A CHANCE!
THEN IT'S A DEAL?

OKAY, STRANGER... IT'S A DEAL! YOU MAKE THIS PLACE PAY AND YOU CAN HAVE HALF THE PROFITS!
GOOD! THEN WE MIGHT AS WELL GET ACQUAINTED! MY NAME'S ERIC EDWARDS!
A THICK-LIPPED GRIN SPREADS OVER THE FAT ONE'S JOWLY FACE...
I'M HERMAN BITTER! THIS IS CHARLIE MARSIN!
GLAD TO KNOW YOU, HERMAN... CHARLIE! NOW HERE'S MY PLAN!
THIS PLACE IS LIKE EVERY OTHER ROADSIDE EATERY ON THE HIGHWAY! WE'VE GOT TO SPECIALIZE! YOU'VE HEARD THE EXPRESSION, 'JACK OF ALL TRADES... MASTER OF NONE'? WELL, WE'RE GOING TO SPECIALIZE IN ONE DISH! LISTEN! HEAR THAT?
FROM FAR OFF, A ROOSTER CROWS... ITS RASPING CRY ECHOING THROUGH THE BALMY CALIFORNIA AIR...
ALL I HEAR IS THE CHICKENS ON THAT FARM UP THE ROAD!
AND THEY'RE PROBABLY VERY CHEAP! WE'RE GOING TO SPECIALIZE IN CHICKEN! NOTHING BUT CHICKEN!
THE NEXT DAY AND THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW ARE FILLED WITH THE SOUNDS OF SAWING AND HAMMERING, AS ERIC BEGINS TO CHANGE THE APPEARANCE OF THE LITTLE RESTAURANT...
WHAT'S HE DOIN' UP THERE, HERMAN?
LOOKS LIKE ERIC'S MAKIN' THE ROOF OVER, CHARLIE!
SLOWLY THE SILHOUETTE OF A HUGE CHICKEN TAKES SHAPE! LARGE BRILLIANTLY COLORED LETTERS ARE PAINTED ON IT...
'THE CHICKEN COOP!' HEY! THAT'S PRETTY SNAZZY, ERIC!
THIS OUGHT TO ATTRACT ATTENTION, EH, BOYS?
THE CHICKEN COOP
THEN THE CLINKING AND CHINKING OF BRICKS RESOUND OVER THE BUSY HIGHWAY...
HE MUST BE NUTS! HE'S PUTTIN' UP A CHIMNEY RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE PLACE!
WHAT IN BLAZES IS THAT, ERIC?
IT'S GOING TO BE A BARBECUE, CHARLIE! WE'RE GOING TO COOK THE CHICKENS RIGHT OUT IN FRONT SO EVERYONE CAN SEE FROM THE ROAD!
3

SOOR, A TIRT DURL OF SMOKE RISES FROM THE BARBECUE! THE SUCCULERT, MOUTH-WATERING ODOR OF BROILIRG CHICKERS MAFTS TORARD THE BUST HIGHWAY...
MRM! THAT SRELLS GOOD! LOOK! BARBEQUED CHICKEN! LET'S STOP ARD EAT HERE, SAM!
OKAY, FLO! HOW 'BOUT IT, KIDS? HUNGRY?
YEAH!
YIPEE!
SD HIGRWAT TRAVELERS BEGIR TO STOP AT 'THE ONICKEN COOP'! THEY DROMD THE TABLES THAT HAVE BEER MOVED OUTSIDE, WATCHIRG THEIR ORDERS TURR OR THE SPIT BEFORE THE RED-HOT COALS...
THIS SURE IS RICE, EH, BELLA?
SOME IDEA!
YUM! I'M STARVED!
DELICIOUS!
'THE CHICKEN COOP' BEGIRS TO THRIVE, AS MORE ARD MORE CUSTOMERS JAM THE ROVEL ESTABLISRMERT...
YOU GERTAINLY HAVE DORE WORDERS, ERIC!
WE'LL HAVE TO BUY SOME MORE TABLES TO ACCOMODATE THE FLOOD OF CUSTOMERS!
AR ADJACENT TRACT OF LARD BORDERIRG THE HIGHMAT IS LEASED AND CLEARED...
THIS WILL MAKE ROOM FOR MORE CARS ARD THE DEEP-FAT-FRYER.
DEEP-FAT-FRYER? WHAT'S THAT FOR?
SOUTHERN-STYLE FRIED CHICKEN! IT WILL BE A GOOD ADDITION TO THE BARBEQUED FOWL!
YOU SURE ARE A SHREWD BUSINESS MAN, ERID!
A LARGE SHINT COPPER GAULDRON IS BROUGHT IN AND SOUTHERR-STYLE, DEEP-FAT-FRIED CHICKEN IS ADDED TO THE MENU...
MMMM! GOOOD! THIYUS IS BETTUH TRAYUR TRET MAYUK IT WAT BAHTUK HOME IM JO-JA, SUR!
WHT, THARK YOU, MA'AM!
THE FAME OF 'THE CHICKEN COOP' BEGIRS TO SPREAD...
MY HUSBAND AND I DROVE THIRTY MILES TO TRT YOUR BARBECUED CHICKEN!
REALLT? TRAT IS MOST GRATIFYING, MA'AM!

THE SUCCESS OF 'THE CHICKEN COOP', WITH ITS OUTDOOR BARBECUE AND DEEP-FAT FRYER, IS UNBELIEVABLE! IN ONE YEAR, THE TINY FOOD-STAND GROWS TO A HUGE ROADSIDE EMPORIUM WITH A HUNDRED CAR PARKING LOT AND SEATS FOR TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY PEOPLE ..
CHARLIE! HERMAN! I THINK IT'S TIME TO BUILD A NEW 'CHICKEN COOP'! I HAVE VISIONS OF SOMETHING BIG... SOMETHING STUPENDOUS! WE'LL BUILD A GIGANTIC BARBECUE CAPABLE OF BROILING FIFTY CHICKENS AT ONE TIME!
WHATEVER YOU SAY, ERIC!
CONSTRUCTION ON 'THE NEW CHICKEN COOP' IS BEGUN! A BEAUTIFUL MODERNISTIC RESTAURANT RISES BESIDE ITS PREDECESSOR! THE BARBECUE IS TREMENDOUS...
EACH ONE OF THESE FOUR SPITS IS TWELVE FEET LONG! WE'LL CATCH THE FAT DRIPPINGS FROM THE BROILING CHICKENS IN THAT CATCH-PAN THERE, AND USE THE STUFF IN THE DEEP-FAT-FRYER!
SAY... THERE'S AN ECONOMICAL IDEA, EH, HERMAN?
THE DEEP-FAT-FRYER IS A HUGE CAULDRON OVER SIX FEET IN DIAMETER AND TWO FEET DEEP...
WE CAN DEEP-FAT-FRY FIFTY CHICKENS AT ONE TIME IN THIS THING!
WE CERTAINLY HAVE COME A LONG WAY, EH, CHARLIE?
WHEN 'THE NEW CHICKEN COOP' IS OPENED TO THE PUBLIC, IT IS AN IMMEDIATE SUCCESS! EVEN WITH ITS HUGE CAPACITY, PEOPLE HAVE TO WAIT ON LINE FOR TABLES
BOY! LOOK AT THAT BARBECUE!
AND LOOK AT THAT CAULDRON! MMMM! SMELLS GOOD, EH?
FORTUNE SMILES UPON THE THREE RESTAURATEURS! THE PROFITS POUR IN! AND WITH MOUNTING PROFITS COMES MOUNTING GREED...
LOOK AT THESE BOOKS, HERMAN! WE NETTED TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS LAST WEEK!
THAT MEANS FIVE HUNDRED APIECE FOR YOU AND ME...
AND... ONE THOUSAND FOR ERIC!
QUITE A LARGE CHUNK FOR HIM... EH, HERMAN? IF.. IF HE WASN'T AROUND, WE COULD SPLIT IT FIFTY-FIFTY! NOT FIVE HUNDRED... BUT ONE GRAND FOR EACH OF US!
AW, BUT WHAT CAN WE DO? WE HAVE THAT AGREEMENT WE MADE BACK WHEN WE WERE NUTHIN'!
IF.. IF ERIC WERE TO.. DIE, WE COULD... FORGET THE AGREEMENT!
5

AW! HE'S HEALTHY AS A...
DON'T BE AS THICK AS YOU LOOK, YOU FAT IDIOT! I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT A NATURAL DEATH!
YOU YOU MEAN... MURDER?!
YES! HE'S GOT NO FAMILY! HE CAME TO US PENNILESS AND ALONE! SO HE PUT US ON TOP! SO WHAT? HE'S GOT A LION'S SHARE! I SAY... LET'S TAKE IT ALL... FOR OURSELVES!
WHAT... WHAT'S YOUR PLAN, CHARLIE?
SIMPLE! ERIC BOUGHT HIMSELF THAT LITTLE RANCH HOUSE OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY! NOW... SUPPOSE... WHILE HE SLEPT... IT CAUGHT FIRE, AND HE BURNED TO DEATH!
THAT NIGHT, ERIC IS AWAKENED BY A SOUND IN HIS ROOM! HE SITS UP, STARING INTO THE DARKNESS...
WHO... WHO'S THERE?
IT'S ME, ERIC! HERMAN! DON'T BE FRIGHTENED!
DESPITE HIS LUMBERING HULK, HERMAN IS UPON ERIC IN A FLASH! CHARLIE MOVES OUT OF THE SHADOWS WITH THE COIL OF ROPE...
STICK THE SAG IN HIS MOUTH!
YEAH!
CHOKE...
THE FAT ONE AND THE SKINNY ONE WORK SWIFTLY! SOON ERIC IS SECURELY TIED TO THE BED AND THE ROOM IS IN FLAMES.
SO LONG, ERIC! THANKS FOR ALL THE HELP!
FROM NOW ON, WE WORK ALONE JUST ME AND HERMAN. FIFTY-FIFTY!
AS THE TWO MEN WATCH FROM A VANTAGE POINT FAR DOWN ERIC'S PRIVATE ROAD, HOT SEARING TONGUES OF FIRE LEAP UPWARD OUT OF THE WINDOWS! SOON ERIC'S NICE NEW HOME IS A ROARING INFERNO...
C'MON, HERMAN! LET'S GO BACK TO THE CHICKEN COOP AND MAKE PLANS!
BOY! THAT'S SOME FIRE!

BUT AS THE FAT ONE AND THE THIN ONE DISAPPEAR INTO THE NIGHT, A BLACKENED AND CHARRED FIGURE CRAWLS PAINFULLY FROM THE FLAMING HOUSE, HOWLING LIKE A DOG THAT HAS JUST BEEN STRUCK BY A CAR...

EEEYI-YI!!!!!!!!!!

THE ODOR OF BURNED FLESH FILLS THE NIGHT AS THE SCORCHED FIGURE DRAGS ITSELF ALONG.. ITS BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS OF AGONY ECHOING INTO THE DARKNESS...

YAAAAÉÉÉÉÉÉÉÉÉÉÉÉ!

IN THEIR OFFICE IN "*THE NEW CHICKEN COOP*," HERMAN AND CHARLES DRINK A TOAST TO THEIR FUTURE! BUT SUDDENLY THEIR GRINS FREEZE ON THEIR FACES AS THE DOOR IS FLUNG OPEN...

BULP!

ERIC! IT... IT CAN'T BE!

IN THE MORNING, THE POLICE... INVESTIGATING THE BURNING OF ERIC'S NICE NEW HOUSE... STOP BY 'THE NEW CHICKEN COOP' TO INQUIRE...

LOOK AT *THIS* ON THE FLOOR! IT'S THE *BLACKENED AND BURNED CORPSE OF A MAN!*

THAT'S *ERIC EDWARD'S BODY!* HE MUST HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN THE *FIRE* IN HIS HOUSE! BUT HOW IN THE WORLD DID HE MANAGE TO DRAG HIMSELF ALL THE WAY *HERE* IN *THAT* CONDITION?

THEN ONE POLICEMAN'S GAZE FALLS UPON THE GIGANTIC BARBECUE...

GOOD LORD!

I...I FEEL.. SICK!

HERMAN DITTER'S SIZZLING BODY HANGS FROM THE TOPMOST SPIT BEFORE THE NOW GLOWING EMBERS! *THE FAT, RENDERED FROM HIS ONCE OBESE BODY, BUBBLES AND BURBLES IN THE IMMENSE CAULDRON!* BOBBING IN THE BOILING GREASE IS THE BROWNED, SEARED REMAINS OF *CHARLIE MARSIN.*

THIS...THIS GUY'S BEEN.. BULP.. *BROILED!*

AND THIS ONE'S BEEN.. CHOKE *SOUTHERN FRIED!*

HEH, HEH! AND NOW MY TALE IS *DONE*, KIDDIES! *WELL DONE!* I HOPE IT'S LEFT YOU WITH A RAVISHING *APPETITE!* WHAT? *NOT HUNGRY?* OH, THAT'S A *SHAME!* I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO *JOIN* ME...AT '*THE CHICKER COOP*'! WHERE *IS* IT? WHY *NEXT* TIME YOU GO OUT DRIVING, *LOOK* FOR IT! THEY HAVE THE MOST *DELICIOUS BROILED FOOD*...OH DO YOU LIKE YOUNG *SOUTHERN-FRIED?* WELL, THAT WINDS UP *THE OLD RAB'S MAN!* WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN *MIRE...TALES FROM THE CRYPT!* 'BYE, NOW!

LET ME BRING YOU UP TO DATE! THE 32-PG FACSIMILE REPRINTS OF THE **EC COMICS** OF THE 50s IS PROCEEDING APACE! GET UP TO SPEED! NEW TO THE LINE IS **FRONTLINE COMBAT** (IT REPLACES **WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY/INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION**, WHICH IS STILL AVAILABLE AS BACK ISSUES. SEE THE INFO AT THE END OF THE LETTER COLUMN IN THIS COMIC!) SO, WHAT ARE YOU SITTING THERE FOR?!

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- ☐ **VAULT**
- ☐ **HAUNT**
- ☐ **WEIRD SCIENCE**
- ☐ **WEIRD FANTASY**
- ☐ **FRONTLINE**
- ☐ **SHOCK**
- ☐ **TWO-FISTED**
- ☐ **CRIME**

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REMIT $8 EACH ($12 OUTSIDE US IN US FUNDS)

DON'T CUT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO. PHOTOCOPY OR YOUR OWN PAPER OKAY!

YET MORE EC COMICS!!

FOR APPROXIMATELY A YEAR, GLADSTONE PUBLISHED A LINE OF **EC** REPRINT COMICS CONSISTING OF THE TITLES SHOWN BELOW. EACH ISSUE CONTAINED 64 PAGES IN FULL COMIC BOOK COLOR, THE FIRST 32 FROM THE 'KEY' TITLE AND THE LAST 32 FROM A SECOND TITLE. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE OCCASIONAL ARTICLES ABOUT THE MACABRE IN LITERATURE, A THEN-CURRENT LETTER COLUMN AND OTHER READER-WRITTEN FEATURES.

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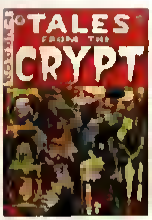

GLAD CRYPT #1

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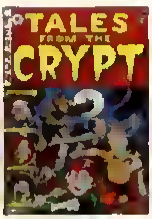

GLAD CRYPT #3

GLAD CRYPT #4

GLAD CRYPT #5

GLAD CRYPT #6

GLAD VAULT #1

GLAD VAULT #2

GLAD VAULT #3

GLAD VAULT #4

GLAD VAULT #5

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